

Aerospace Education History Events: August

1 August 1997-Boeing becomes the king of the skies when they purchase McDonnell-Douglas for a sum of \$16.3 billion.

3 August 1981-Almost 13,000 air-traffic controllers go on strike when negotiations with the federal government to shorten their workweek and raise their pay are denied. Across the country about 7,000 flights are canceled and President Reagan threatened to fire any controllers who did not return to work.

5 August 1964-F-8 Crusaders, A-1 Skyraiders and A-4 Skyhawks from the aircraft carriers USS Ticonderoga and USS Constellation fly 64 missions against North Vietnamese coastal targets as part of Operation Pierce Arrow.

5 August 1981-President Reagan begins firing 11,359 air-traffic controllers who violated his order for them to return to work. He also declared a lifetime ban on rehiring the strikers by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

6 August 1945-At 8:16 am the B-29 bomber Enola Gay piloted by Lt. Col. Paul Tibbets drops the world's first atomic bomb, "Little Boy", over the Japanese city of Hiroshima. The blast had the effect of 12,500 tons of TNT. Over 80,000 people were killed from the blast, another 35,000 injured and another 60,000 would die by the end of the year from effects of the fallout.

6 August 1997-A Korean Air Boeing 747 crashes into a jungle in Guam killing 228 people. Of the 254 passengers and crew aboard Flight 801, 22 passengers and 3 crew members are rescued in the jungle after the crash. The cause of the crash resulted from poor operation of the A.B. Won Guam International Airport and the airplane missing the runway by several miles with a fatigued pilot.

7 August 1959-Launched from Cape Canaveral, Florida, Explorer 6 takes the first picture of earth from space. The photo was taken about 17,000 miles above the earth's surface and took almost 40 minutes to transmit back to earth.

8 August 1991-Pilot, James B. Irwin, of the Lunar Rover vehicle for the Apollo 15 mission dies at the age of 61. The Lunar Rover vehicle transported Irwin and David Scott around the Hadley-Apennine site, 462 miles north of the lunar equator, to collect lunar rocks and core samples.

9 August 1945-At 11:02 am the second atomic bomb, named "Fat Man", was dropped on the city of Nagasaki, Japan. The bomb was dropped from a B-29 called "Bock's Car" and was commanded by Maj. Charles W. Sweeney. The explosion of the second bomb was equal to 22,000 tons of TNT. The dropping of the second bomb brought the Japanese to the table for an unconditional surrender.

11 August 1967-For the first time, American pilots are authorized to bomb road and rail links in the Hanoi-Haiphong area and permitted American aircraft to bomb targets within 25 miles of the Chinese border.

12 August 1953-The Soviets detonate a 400 kiloton bomb in Kazakhstan known as the "Layer Bomb". The bomb had 30 times the explosive power as the bomb dropped on Hiroshima and the mushroom cloud it produced stretched five miles into the sky. The "Layer Cake" bomb was fueled by layers of uranium and lithium deuteride, a hydrogen isotope. The Soviet bomb was smaller and more portable than the American hydrogen bomb.

12 August 1985-Twelve minutes after takeoff from Haneda Airport an explosion tore apart the hydraulic control lines and blew part of the tail section off of a Japan Air Lines Boeing 747. For 27 minutes the pilot tried to regain control of Flight 123 but with no hydraulics he had no controls. The airplane crashed into Mount Otsuka 70 miles northwest of Tokyo. Of the 524 persons aboard, only four were found alive.

15 August 1935-The actor and humorist Will Rogers dies in a plane crash in Alaska with his friend and aviation pioneer, Wiley Post.

16 August 1987-A Northwest Airlines DC-9 crashes during takeoff from Detroit Metropolitan Airport in Michigan. The cause of the crash of Flight 255 was pilot error. The pilot and co-pilot were in a hurry to avoid incoming bad weather when they forgot to extend the wing flaps. At the end of the 6,800 foot runway the plane should have been about 600 feet in the air. Instead it was only 40 feet and the plane collided with lamp posts and a rental car office. The plane then crashed onto a road a half a mile away and hit a car on the I-94 Bridge killing both people in the vehicle. Of the 155 persons aboard Flight 255 only one four year old girl survived. One of the people on the plane when it crashed was Phoenix Suns' center Nick Vanos.

17 August 1968-Department of Defense estimates that 117,000 combat missions were flown over North Vietnam since February 1965. Over 2.5 million tons of bombs and rockets were dropped.

17 August 1978-Ben Abruzzo, Maxie Anderson and Larry Newman complete the first transatlantic balloon flight aboard their helium filled balloon named Double Eagle II. They lifted off from Presque Isle, Maine and landed 137 hours and 3,233 miles later in a barley field near Paris, France.

19 August 1960-American U-2 spy pilot Francis Gary Powers is sentenced to 10 years imprisonment after confessing to espionage flying activities.

19 August 1980-A fire aboard a Saudi Airlines Lockheed L-1011 forces an emergency landing. The fire was caused by a portable butane stove one of the passengers was using to cook with. The plane was landed safely but burst into flames at the end of the runway. None of the 301 persons aboard escaped the inferno.

20 August 1975-Unmanned American planetary probe is Viking 1 is launched from Cape Canaveral, Florida to enter Mars' orbit and capture images of the red planet.

21 August 1965-American pilots are given authorization to destroy any Soviet made missiles while raiding North Vietnam.

26 August 1957-Russia announces that it has successfully tested an intercontinental ballistic missile capable of being fired to any part of the world.

26 August 1967-Being badly injured after ejecting from his North American F-100F when it is shot down over North Vietnam, Maj. George E. Day is captured by the North Vietnamese and severely tortured. Day was able to escape and was later recaptured and sent to Hanoi. Day was awarded the Medal of Honor for gallantry while a POW after his return home in 1973.

26 August 1974-Aviation pioneer Charles Lindbergh dies at the age of 72 in Maui, Hawaii.

28 August 1972-Capt. Richard S. Ritchie becomes the U.S. Air Force's first ace since the Korean War. Capt. Ritchie shot down his fifth MiG over Hanoi with his co-pilot Capt. Charles B. DeBellevue in their F-4 out of Udorn Air Force Base in Thailand.

28 August 1988-Three Italian Freccie Tricolori team, flying Aermacchi MB-339 jets, collide in mid air during an air show at Ramstein Air Force Base in Germany. The collision occurred when one of the pilots attempted a cross-over and miscalculated. The three pilots were killed instantly as well as another 60 spectators when debris and fuel fell from the sky.

29 August 1949-The Soviets successfully detonate their first atomic bomb at a test site in Semipalatinsk, Kazakhstan. The Soviet bomb produced an explosion equal to 20,000 tons of TNT.